



British Columbia: Playground Equipment Upgrades

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Summary

Over the course of the next five years over 100 schools in the Vancouver school district will need to replace or update their existing playground equipment. This decision was made following a recent study on 124 playgrounds in the district. The capital investment needed to replace the playground equipment is valued at \$3 million. This includes \$2.1 million for new equipment, and \$559,000 for cost of demolition and installation. These various playground renovation projects are expected to be completed by 2014.

Background:

Parental concerns over safety and the general status of playground equipment is the driving force behind the need for replacing or upgrading playground equipment for children. Over the past five years, in British Columbia, there have been cuts to education funding and after-school projects. This coupled with a decrease on spending of infrastructure means that very few upgrades to playground equipment have taken place in the past few years.

In 2008, Canada's imports of playground equipment totaled approximately USD\$ 31.8 million, of which more than 50% was from the United States. British Columbia represents 5% of this import market. In 2008 British Columbia imported \$1.6 million of this type of equipment.

Canadian schools operate on a citywide district school board. Thus each elementary school in Vancouver falls under the jurisdiction of the Vancouver School Board. (<http://www.vsb.bc.ca/>). Similarly there are 13 suburbs that comprise Metro Vancouver with individual playground equipment needs. US firms interested in supplying playground equipment to these schools need to be aware of the numerous school districts and Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) involved in the program.

Opportunities for U.S firms:

The recent announcement to replace playground equipment in Vancouver creates excellent export opportunities for US suppliers of playground equipment such as swings, slides, accessible equipment, spring rides and freestanding climbers. US firms interested in ensuring their playground equipment is in the local market should consider participating in any of the trade promotion programs offered by the US Commercial Service, such as Gold Key or International Partner Search service. A full menu of services is available at: www.buyusa.gov/Canada.

For More Information

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